DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 262 173 CE 042 528

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TITLE Validation and Development of Competencies for Meeting Planners. Final Report.
INSTITUTION Saint Louis Community Coll. at Forest Park, Mo.
SPONS AGENCY Missouri State Dept. of Education, Jefferson City. Research Coordinating Unit.
PUB DATE 6 Jun 85
NOTE 29p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Tests/Evaluation Instruments (160)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Competence; *Competency Based Education; Curriculum Development; Educational Needs; *Entry Workers; *Hospitality Occupations; *Job Skills; *Meetings; Occupational Information; Planning; Postsecondary Education; Vocational Education

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine the entry-level requirements for meeting planners. The study benefited from the definition of the body of knowledge that had already been done for a professional meeting planner certificate by the Association of Professional Meeting Planners International. To document the competencies needed for an entry-level position and to understand the needs of the community, a survey was sent to the 204 members of the St. Louis Association of Meeting Planners International; 74 replied. The project accomplished a definite ranking of skills that are important for a person beginning a career in meeting planning in the St. Louis area. The study showed that writing and communications skills are critical, that travel/onsite skills need to be taught, and that accounting and office procedures, including marketing, need to be understood. Some of the skills are clearly academic, while the technical skills are closely related to the operations of a hotel and banquet center or conference center. From this study, the research coordinator created a job description of an entry-level meeting planner and a list of the rankings of skills. Differences of opinion among survey respondents were also discussed. (KC)

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FINAL REPORT

VALIDATION AND DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENCIES FOR MEETING PLANNERS

Project No. 85-131/132-600-10(149-150)(A)

Mary H. Walk
St. Louis Community College
At Forest Park
St. Louis, Mo.

June 6, 1985

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Jefferson City, Missouri 65102

BODY

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM: One of the distribution systems for the products of the travel industry are meeting planners. They are middlemen in the travel sales distribution system. As intermediaries representing the buyer they have the power to influence how, where, and when travel products will be distributed. They are typically salaried employees who contract for travel services at efficient costs on behalf of their organization.

The suppliers of the travel industry within the state of Missouri are dedicated to attracting the business brought by the professional meeting planner. The construction of facilities throughout the state reflect this desire to host meetings and conferences.

The problem arises for vocational educators that the opportunity for formal education for the vocation of meeting planning has been scarce. The training has been largely on-the-job through a logical progression from small, informal groups to larger meetings and from there to conferences and conventions on a national and even international level. Leaders within the meeting planning world are stressing the need for continuing education as responsibilities increase. The travel industry as a whole would benefit from including this vocation in our educational system for the members of the travel, tourism industry. Marketing educators have always included channels of distribution as part of the knowledge requirements for a complete understanding of the market system. Where the need arises for a specialized marketing program in Hospitality and Tourism, meeting planning needs to be part of the curriculum.

Gaining credibility and projecting an image of a professional has been difficult for those in meeting planning. Finding the role of formal education and fulfilling their educational needs would contribute to a sense of professionalisn in the meeting industry. In order to demonstrate their ability meeting planners have been working toward a system of certification. A body of knowledge has been defined and the sucessful mastering of this knowledge and practise of the

skill requirements will be rewarded with the title Certified Meeting Professional. The first opportunity to obtain this title is a test that is being administered in June 1985.

The thrust of vocational education has been placement. With this placement need in mind the focus of this study has been the entry level requirement for a meeting planner. This study benefited from the definition of the body of knowledge that was done for the certification process. With the parameters already defined we were able to concentrate on defining those skills that would help a beginning meeting planner achieve sucess. To document the competencies needed for an entry level position and to understand the needs of our community a survey was sent to the members of the St. Louis Association of Meeting Planners International. The results are a valuable guide to the development of viable curriculum.

OBJECTIVES: Objective number one was to research available sources of information about the work performed by meeting planners. For the past few years a committee has been studying criteria to be use for a certification program for meeting planners. In an interview with the St Louis representative to the Education Committee of Meeting Planners International, Nell Lockhart I was given the names of the people active in this certification process nationally. The Meeting Planners Internation representative to the Certification Committee, Susan Armstrong of Columbus, Ohio gave me a copy of the Body of Knowledge of the Field of Meeting Planning and Administration, a report prepared by Francine Butler, Ph.D. for the Convention Liaison Council Certified Meeting Professional Board dated September, 1983. This Body of Knowledge is nationally recognized as thorough and complete.

Objective number two was to analyze this research to develop an in-depth understanding of the elements of the job of meeting planning. The report on the Body of Knowledge listed the elements of the job of meeting planning. My understanding of these elements was provided by interviews with knowledgeable people in the field of meeting planning. A list of the people interviewed and their titles is included in the appendix.

Objective number three was to use this analysis to list competencies needed for a meeting planning career. The competencies were listed in a tentative survey form. This survey form was discussed in an interview with Dr. Terry Chapman Middletown, Ohio, the Education Director for Meeting Planners

International. He provided several suggestion for organizing the survey that would encourage people to answer this survey. It was his suggestion that since the listing of competencies showed certain relationships that they be placed into groups or catagories. This resulted in the five skill catagories shown on the survey form; basic skills, business skills, travel/ on-site skills, instructional/procedural skills and communication skills. A copy of the survey form is included in the appendix.

The fourth objective was to conduct a survey to validate research findings. As the competencies for certification had been validated on a national level, this survey sought to validated competencies needed by an entry level meeting planner within the Metropolitan St. Louis area. The survey was sent to everyone on the membership mailing list of SLAMPI, the St. Louis chapter of Meeting Planners International. The membership list includes people from the area surrounding St. Louis to the Columbia, Jefferson City area. The survey was also sent to some to the prospective members list.

The fifth objective was to compile a final report of the elements of the job and the validated list of competencies needed. From all of the research information a job description has been written. The personal interviews and the open-ended questions at the end of the survey form have provided a in-depth explanation of the vocation of meeting planning. The competencies are listed and ranked in order of importance for an entry level meeting planner. To facilitate reporting the skill catagories are listed as competency areas with specific skills listed as functions within that particular competency area.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE: The survey was sent to people of the meeting planning community who are members of the St. Louis Association of Meeting Planners International. This was not a random sample as our purpose was specifically to survey this group of people. Their replies provide valid information for the direction to be taken in providing course material for the vocation of meeting planning.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: What was accomplished was a definite ranking of skills that are important for a person beginning a career in meeting planning. While the results are specific for this community, other communities may find the results have implications for them. This survey would be easy to duplicate. For this community the results provide an insight to which competencies should be stressed. Writing and communications skills are critical, the travel/on-site skills need to be taught and accounting and office procedures including marketing need to be understood. If a program taught those skills that had a ranking of 60% or better they would have a strong program.

Since meeting planning as a career requires many skills that are germaine to other vocations within the travel industry, work experience in a related area may very well be the wisest course to follow for career progression. The competencies needed to be a meeting planner should be taught so wise career choices can be made. Some of the skills are clearly academic with the technical skills closely related to the operations of a hotel and banquet center or conference center.

Further work in this area should be in curriculum development. Further research in this area should explore the potential for adult education. This career lends itself to combining education with job progression. Each progression leads to further responsibilities that would benefit from the opportunity to learn in the classroom rather than under fire. I recommend that anyone contemplating teaching meeting planning avail themselves of the findings from this study.

ATTACHMENTS

PROCEDURES: Throughout the entire period of this study current literature in the field of meeting planning was being read. A bibliography is included in the appendix.

In order to begin interviewing knowledgeable people within the meeting planning industry, it was expedient to understand the protocol of the leadership of the industry. With the restraints of the budget for this study the majority of information would have to come from local leadership. The first interview was with the outgoing president of SLAMPI, St. Louis Association of Meeting Planners International. The interview with her explained the purpose of the study and asked her questions of protocol and judgement on who should be interviewed. Her signature indicating the correctness of my transcript of ths interview is in my files. As a member of the national education committee for MPI, Meeting Planners International she shared the status of the work being done for certification and the names of people active in creating the process for certification. This work on certification involved representatives from different aspects of the meeting planning industry in determining standards and skill requirements.

One of the people she named as a good source of information was Rudy Wright of San Diego. He was interviewed in July. The transcript of this interview is in my files. The interview questions dealt with characteristics or traits, activities, and results needed by a meeting planner on different levels of career progression. During the course of the interview he shared his strong involvement with the creation of the certification process. He indicated a body of knowledge was already in exsistence and in the possession of Susan Armstrong. Susan Armstrong of Columbus, Ohio was Meeting Planners International member of the certification committee.

Susan Arnstrong was interviewed in August. The transcript of this interview is in my files. The interview questions dealt with characteristics, activities and results needed by a meeting planner on different levels of career progression.

During the interview she handed me a copy of the Body of Knowledge of the Field of Meeting Planning and Administration. This thirty nine page document provided a basic list of core knowledge and skill requirements common to all professional meeting planners. With a nationally recognized study of knowledge and skill requirements available my study was able to focus on the needs of our local community particularly at entry level.

After an analysis of the knowledge and skill requiremens a tentative survey form was designed to be used in our community. This tentative survey form was discussed with Dr. Terry Chapman of Middletown, Ohio. It was his suggestion the questions in the survey be organized in related catagories for ease in reading and answering. The remodeled survey form was field tested with leaders in our local community; Jack Bennings, president of SLAMPI, Bob Green, past president of MPI, and Weldon Webb, SLAMPI Board of Directors. Their suggestions resulted in some minor changes in the survey form.

The survey was mailed to the 204 members of SLAMPI. Membership in SLAMPI extends west to Columbia and Jefferson City and extends east to include Springfield, Ill. We received 74 useable replies. A later mailing to 45 prospective members resulted in 12 replies, but they were not received until after the deadline for tabulation. The replies were tabulated using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences. The information requested was an average rating per skill from the over all replies and the average rating per skill from each sub group. The 74 responses tabulated and the 126 page computer printout of the frequencies and cross tabulation analysis are in my files.

There were four possible replies to the skill questions, very important, important, somewhat important or not important. Using the frequency percentage of replies for very important and important the skills within each competency area were ranked in order of importance. A job description for an entry level meeting planner encompasses the skill listings. An addition to this job description is a description of the personal characteristics needed taken from the open ended replies and the interviews.

A cross tabulation was performed just looking to see if there were any significant relationships that might warrant further study. The statistical factors indicating significant difference of opinion examined were the chi square, gamma and the significance factor. Generally this group of people agreed. There were eight items out of the fifty three items questioned that reflected a difference in perception. The listing of the places where there were differences is included in the results.

A copy of the survey form and the cover letter that accompanied it are part of the attachments. Using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences and the survey form it would be easy to repeat the research.

REFERENCES: N/A

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Books

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Convention Liaison Manual, Convention Liaison Council, Washington, D.C., 1980.

Periodicals

Corporate Meetings and Incentives, Harcourt Braca Javanovich Publication, New York.

Health Care Conference Planner, Bayard Publications, Stamford, Ct.

Meeting News, Gralla Publication, New York.

Meeting Manager, Meeting Planners International, Middletown,Ohio.

Interviews

Susan R. Armstrong, Mgr., Conference Coordinator, Battellle Columbus Laboratories, Columbus, Ohio.

Jack Bennings, Executive Vice President, Mississippi Valley Farm Equipment Association, St. Louis, Mo.

Robert C. Green, Mgr. Meetings and Travel Management, Ralston Purina Company, St. Louis, Mo.

Nell H. Lockhart, Vice President, Religious Heritage of America, St. Louis, Mo.

Rudy R. Wright, President, Convention and Conference Consultants San Diego, Ca.

INSTRUMENTS: The instruments used to complete this study were an interview guide and a survey form. A copy of the interview guide is attached. A copy of the survey form is attached with the cover letter that accompanied it.

GLOSSARY: N/A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

An interview guide was used so that information obtained from a variety of sources could be compared. It was a guide and could be amended as responses led to other points of information that were interesting and important to the overall objectives of the study. The following is the interview guide used:

My goal is to point out career opportunities for students of Tourism and Hospitality. A vocation that appears in Travel and Tourism is Meeting Planning which becomes very important to hospitality people.

Briefly describe the career progression leading to your present job. Specific job titles would be useful.

When you first began meeting planning responsibilities what were your activities?

What skills or competencies were necessary for you to succeed at this level?

What results did you achieve that allowed you to progress to the next level?

At this next level what were your activities, particularly those activities that led to successful career progression?

What results at this level allowed you to progress to the next level?

At this level what are your activities that provide for successful results?

What characteristics or traits are important for a person to succeed as a meeting planner?

These questions on activities, results and characteristics are used for each level of progression experienced by the person being interviewed.

St. Louis Community College
at Forest Park

5600 Oakland Avenue
St. Louis, Missouri 63110
Telephone 314/644-9100

April 3, 1985

Dear Colleague:

For the past year with the help of a grant from the Missouri State Department of Education, I have been studying the vocation of meeting planning. We would like to find the place of a formal education within this growing dynamic field so that formal education may contribute to a sense of professionalism in the meeting industry.

This study has benefited from the work currently being done for certification. To understand the needs of our community and to effectively document the skills needed for an entry-level position, the enclosed survey is being sent to members of SLAMPI. We will be happy to share the results of our survey with you. It will be very valuable for our planning, and we hope the knowledge gained from this study will benefit your operation.

A brief appendix has been added to the survey form with an explanation of some of the questions we had difficulty wording clearly. I sincerely appreciate your time and the insight you provide.

Sincerely,

Mary H. Walk

Mary H. Walk, Associate Professor
Hospitality Restaurant Management
and Tourism Department

MHW/pk

Att: 2

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MEETING PLANNER/SUPPLIER SURVEY

I. Are you a ☐ meeting planner or ☐ supplier?

☐ corporate ☐ association ☐ educational institution

II. How important is the following work experience for an entry level meeting planner?

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
1. Association Experience				
2. Clerical Office Experience				
3. Administrative Office Experience				
4. Hotel Experience				
5. Planning Meetings Experience				
6. Sales Experience				
7. Other - Please Specify				

III. How important is the following educational experience for an entry level meeting planner?

1. High School Graduate				
2. Some College				
3. College Graduate				

IV. How important are the following skills for an entry level meeting planner?

1. Basic Skills				
a. Typing				
b. Geography				
c. Math				
d. Writing				
e. Protocol				
f. Grooming/Appearance				
2. Business Skills				
a. Office, Clerical				
b. Office, Administration				
c. Accounting/Budget				
d. Contracts/Insurance				
e. Computer				
f. Marketing/Promotion				
3. Travel/On-Site Skills				
a. Travel Arrangements				
(1) Air				
(2) Ground				
b. Site Selection				
c. Rooming Arrangements				
d. Meeting Room Setup				
e. A.V. Equipment Arrangements				
f. Registration Setup Arrangements				
g. Food & Beverage Arrangements				
h. Logistics				
i. Recreation/Entertainment Arrange.				

- Continued -

How important are the following skills for an entry level meeting planner?

	Very Important	Important	Somewhat Important	Not Important
4. Instructional/Procedural Skills				
a. Parlimentary Procedures Knowledge				
b. Preparing Agendas				
c. Knowledge of Characteristics of Market Group				
d. Meeting Formats Knowledge				
e. Group Dynamics Knowledge				
f. Speaker/Trainer Selection				
g. Development of A.V. Materials				
h. Evaluation Procedures				
5. Communication Skills				
a. Recognizing a Group's Goals and Objectives				
b. Negotiation Skills				
c. Creation of Promotional Materials				
d. Communications to Participants				
e. Communications with Staff				
f. Communications with Hotels				
g. Working with Media				
h. Post Meeting Publication				

V. How would you characterize the strengths and weaknesses of candidates for entry level positions you have interviewed/worked with in the last two years?

	Strong 1	2	3	4	Weak 5
1. Basic Skills					
2. Business Skills					
3. Location Skills					
4. Instructional/Procedural					
5. Communication Skills					

I. GENERAL COMMENTS:

1. _____

Please specify if there is a particular skill lacking in one of the general categories.

2. _____

What characteristics do you look for in an entry level meeting planner?

3. _____

What activities will be performed by an entry level meeting planner?

APPENDIX

Logistics:	The movement of people with all it involves in planning space and time. May also include movement of equipment.
Meeting Formats:	General sessions, small group sessions, coffee breaks, etc. How they are put together for the total conference.
Group Dynamics:	How people act within a group. How is participation encouraged. What type of leadership is needed. What is needed within the group sessions.

FINAL PRODUCT

THE VOCATION OF MEETING PLANNING

Results of a Study

One of the replies to our survey said, "All categories more or less important depending on the individual. Can't be strong in all categories -must make choices when hiring." Education has this same problem. We must make choices. What do we teach when all is more or less important. If our teaching dovetails with hiring, the individual benefits. When reading the numbers and percentages keep this in mind that we need to make wise choices on what to teach. It is a great benefit to education when the industry people are willing to share their knowledge and insight of their industry. We received 74 replies that were useable, this is 36% of the SLAMPI membership; 33% were from corporate meeting planners, 23% from association meeting planners and 23% from suppliers, 12% of the responses came from educational institution meeting planners and 8% were from meeting planners non specific. There were forty eight questions with an answer rating the skill as very important, important, somewhat important or not important. There were five questions with answers ranking the skill from 1 strong to 5 weak. There were three open ended questions.

From the standpoint of making choices on what to teach the most important numbers are the rankings of skills in order of importance and the indication that certain competency areas have a higher priority. We have written a description of the activities of an entry level meeting planer with an eye to the rankings of importance. The job description provides parameters for course content. The job description is given flesh by the answers to the question about needed characteristics. What type of person will do the best for themselves and for the job in this vocation. This provides some rational basis for judgement on who will benefit from a study of this vocation.

ACTIVITIES OF AN ENTRY LEVEL MEETING PLANNER
A JOB DESCRIPTION

A meeting planner follows good grooming habits, is able to write understandable material, has a working knowledge of protocol, performs computations, has a knowledge of basic geography and can function competently with a typewriter keyboard.

A meeting planner is able to communicate in a variety of situations with a variety of people.

The meeting planner is able to plan the meeting room setup, handle logistics, select a site, and arrange for food and beverage, lodging, registration, ground travel, air travel, A.V. equipmentand recreation/entertainment.

The meeting planner is able to work with a budget, follow good accounting procedures, administer an office, understand contracts and insurance, perform marketing and promotional work, perform clerical tasks and utilize the computer.

The meeting planner understands meeting formats, knows the group of potential attendees, is able to prepare agendas, can use evaluation procedures, is able to select a speaker/ trainer, understands group dynamics, can develop A.V. materials and understands parlimentary procedures.

RANKINGS OF SKILLS

Skills within the five competency areas were given different levels of importance. The answers rated the skill as very important, important, somewhat important or not important. Within the competency area that encompasses basic skills, the skills were ranked in this order of importance.

1. Grooming or Appearance - 97.3% ranked imp. or v.i.
2. Writing Skills - 95.9% ranked imp. or v.i.
3. Protocol - 94.6% ranked imp. or v.i.
4. Math Skills - 86.2% ranked imp. or v.i.
5. Geography - 65.3% ranked imp. or v.i.
6 Typing - 57.6% ranked imp. or v.i.

Withing the competency area of communications the skills were ranked in this order of importance.

1. Communications to Hotel - 97.1% ranked imp. or v.i.
2. Communications to Staff - 95.7% ranked imp. or v.i.
3. Negotiation Skills - 93% ranked imp. or v.i.
4. Communications to Participants - 91.6% ranked imp. or v.i.
5. Recognizing Group's Goals - 91.5% ranked imp. or v.i.
6. Creation of Promotional Materials - 78.9% ranked imp. or v.i.
7. Working With Media - 54.9% ranked imp. or v.i.
8. Post Meeting Publications - 52.1% ranked imp. or v.i.

Withing the competency area requiring travel and on-site skills, the skills were ranked in this order of importance.

1. Meeting Room Setup - 93.3% ranked imp. or v.i.
2. Logistics - 91.9% ranked imp. or v.i.
3. Site Selection - 90.6% ranked imp. or v.i.
4. Food and Beverage - 89.2% ranked imp. or v.i.
5. Rooming Arrangements - 86.5% ranked imp. or v.i.
6. Registration Setup - 83.8% ranked imp. or v.i.
7. Ground Travel - 78.4% ranked imp. or v.i.
8. Air Traval - 75.7% ranked imp. or v.i.
9. A. V. Equipment - 75.7% ranked imp. or v.i.
10. Recreation/Entertainment - 67.2% ranked imp. or v.i.

RANKINGS OF SKILLS

Within the competency area of business skills, the skills were ranked in this order of importance.

1. Accounting/Budget - 90.5% ranked imp. or v.i.
2. Office Administration - 87.7% ranked imp. or v.i.
3. Contracts/Insurance - 82.2% ranked imp. or v.i.
4. Marketing/Promotion - 74.3% ranked imp. or v.i.
5. Clerical Office - 57.7% ranked imp. or v.i.
6. Computer - 55.5% ranked imp. or v.i.

Within the Instructional/Procedural competency area the skills were ranked in this order of importance.

1. Knowledge of Meeting Formats - 84.8% ranked imp. or v.i.
2. Knowledge of Market Group - 80.3% ranked imp. or v.i.
3. Preparing Agendas - 77.4% ranked imp. or v.i.
4. Evalution Procedures - 67.7% ranked imp. or v.i.
5. Speaker/Trainer Selection - 63.4% ranked imp. or v.i.
6. Knowledge of Group Dynamics - 63.4% ranked imp. or v.i.
7. Development of A.V. Materials - 55% ranked imp. or v.i.
8. Parlimentary Procedures - 36.6% ranked imp. or v.i.

RANKINGS OF EXPERIENCE

The respondents were asked to rate the value of work experience and education for an entry level meeting planner. At the beginning of a career in meeting planning the following work experiences were listed. The individual experiences were ranked in this order of importance.

1. Planning Meetings Experience - 81.7% ranked as imp. or v.i.
2. Administrative Office Exp. - 73.6% ranked as imp. or v.i.
3. Clerical Office Experience - 50% ranked as imp. or v.i.
4. Hotel Experience - 41.4% ranked as imp. or v.i.
5. Sales Experience - 31.4% ranked as imp. or v.i.
6. Association Experience - 31% ranked as imp. or v.i.

RANKINGS OF EXPERIENCE

At the beginning of a career in meeting planning the following educational experiences were ranked in this order of importance.

1. High School Graduate - 90.3% ranked as imp. or v.i.
2. Some College - 78% ranked as imp. or v.i.
3. College Graduate - 57.8% ranked as imp. or v.i.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

The respondents were asked to characterize the strengths and weaknesses of candidates for entry level positions or entry level people they have worked with in each of the five competency areas within the last two years. The ranking was from one to five with one being strong and five being weak. Eighteen people did not answer this question and indicated it was not applicable. Of the people that did answer one third were suppliers and two thirds were meeting planners. The following rankings were given to entry level people.

1. Basic Skills 51.8% ranked as a 1 or a 2, 41.1% were average (a 3)
2. Communication Skills 46.4% ranked as a 1 or a 2, 35.7% average.
3. Business Skills 42.9% ranked as a 1 or a 2, 32.1% average.
4. Instruction Skills 27.3% ranked as a 1 or 2, 41.8% average.
5. Travel/On-Site Skills 26.4% ranked as a 1 or 2, 47.2% average.

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Personal interviews during the study and the open ended questions on the survey form revealed person characteristics needed by a meeting planner. The characteristic most frequently identified is organization with an ability to handle details. Rudy Wright, the President of Convention and Conference Consultants of San Diego, talks about taking the general meeting plan and bringing it down to specific details with what they call a staging guide or function form. All the details are pulled out of the general plan in to the specific functions with the function sheet. The function sheet is made out each time the people move or go to something different. It indicates all the details for each specific function.

Given the same importance as organization is communications skills and the abililty to work with people on all levels. Susan Armstrong, Meeting Planners International Certification Committee member, referred to this people characteristic as maturity, "We look for people who can deal with life and other people with tact. This has nothing to do with age. We deal with thousands of people on all levels. A meeting planner can be flirted with, talked down to, sworn at. Can be in emergency situations, a heart attack, choking. A big part of this job requires people who have experience in dealing with people problems."

The third characteristic given great emphasis is an ability to deal with stress and the stamina to work the long hours of a meeting. Enthusiasm, energy, strong, hard worker, healthy, were some of the phrases used. Bob Green used the phrase, "Being able to hang loose."

Other characteristics mentioned were flexibility, self-confidence, self-starter, resourcefulness, initiative, able to think, and not afraid to travel, stay in hotels and interact with unfamiliar people in unfamiliar places.

DIFFERENCES OF OPINION

A cross tabulation was performed just looking to see if there were any significant relationships that might warrant further study. The statistical factors indicating significant difference of opinion examined were the chi square, gamma and the significance factor. Generally this group of people agreed. The material is consistently percieved all across the board for most items. There were only eight items out of the fifty three items questioned that reflected a difference in perception. The few instances where there is an indication of differences of opinion that may be significant are noteworthy. The responses of each of the five sub groups were tabulated. The five sub groups were: 1. Meeting Planners, non specific. 2. Corporate Meeting Planners. 3. Association Meeting Planners. 4. Educational Institution Meeting Planners. 5. Suppliers.

The response Association Experience to the question asking how important is the following work experience for an entry level meeting planner showed some differences. Within the four sub groups of meeting planners 74.5% rated this not important or somewhat important, while 51.1% of the suppliers rated it important or very important.

The response Math to the question asking how important is the following basic skill for an entry level meeting planner showed some differences. 59% of the very important responses came from the sub group corporate meeting planners. The other sub groups listed it generally as important while 50% of the sub group meeting planners, non specific rated it as somewhat important.

The response Air Travel Arrangements to the question how important are the following travel/on-site skills showed some differences of opinion. 88% of the suppliers rated it very important or important, while 28% of the sub groups of meeting plamers rated it not important or somewhat important.

The response Ground Travel Arrangements to the question how important are the following travel/on-site skills showed some differences of opinion. 94% of the suppliers rated this

as very important or important, while 26% of the sub groups of meeting planners rated it not important or somewhat important.

The response Meeting Formats Knowledge to the question how important are the Instructional/Procedural Skills showed some difference of opinion. The total rating for all groups 84.8% responded with very important or important, but 29.2% of the corporate meeting planners ranked it only somewhat important.

The response Evaluation Procedures to the question how important are the Instructional/Procedural Skills showed some difference of opinion. Within the four sub groups of meeting planners 35% gave this a rating of not important or somewhat important, but the educational meeting planners 100% indicated it was important or very important.

The response Creation of Promotional Materials to the questions on Communications Skills showed some difference of opinion. 41.6% of the corporate meeting planners indicated this was not important or only somewhat important. The association meeting planners rated this important or very important 94.1%, and 100% of the educational meeting planners rated it important or very important.

The question asking for the strengths and weaknesses of candidates for entry level positions interviewed or worked with in Communication Skills showed a difference of opinion. 78.5% of the suppliers rated this skill as average or weak. 71.8% of the answering sub groups of meeting planners rank this skill with a 1 or 2 showing it as a strong skill.

When the educational people say it is very important to be able to create promotional materials it probably reflects there really are some difference in their job situation and for the corporate meeting planners math may be more important in their job situation. While generally these groups agreed the few variations in their replies may be important for career planning. The suppliers response to the communication skill of entry level meeting planners may be the result of their experience with these people.

DISCLAIMER:

"The activity which is the subject of this report was supported in whole or in part by funds from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Division of Career and Adult Education. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education or the Division of Career and Adult Education, and no official endorsement should be inferred."